

written agreement between the participating jurisdiction and the lender. The written agreement must specify the forms and amounts of homeownership assistance that the participating jurisdiction authorizes the lender to provide to families and any conditions that apply to the provision of such homeownership assistance.

(2) Before the lender provides any homeownership assistance to a family, the participating jurisdiction must verify that the family is low-income and must inspect the housing for compliance with the property standards in § 92.251.

(3) No fees (e.g., origination fees or points) may be charged to a family for the HOME homeownership assistance provided pursuant to this paragraph (e), and the participating jurisdiction must determine that the fees and other amounts charged to the family by the lender for the first mortgage financing are reasonable. Reasonable administrative costs may be charged to the HOME program as a project cost. If the participating jurisdiction requires lenders to pay a fee to participate in the HOME program, the fee is program income to the HOME program.

(4) If the nonprofit lender is a subrecipient or contractor that is receiving HOME assistance to determine that the family is eligible for homeownership assistance, but the participating jurisdiction or another entity is making the assistance to the homebuyer (e.g., signing the documents for the loan or the grant), the requirements of paragraphs (e)(2) and (3) of this section are applicable.

(f) *Homebuyer program policies.* The participating jurisdiction must have and follow written policies for:

(1) Underwriting standards for homeownership assistance that evaluate housing debt and overall debt of the family, the appropriateness of the amount of assistance, monthly expenses of the family, assets available to acquire the housing, and financial resources to sustain homeownership;

(2) Responsible lending, and

(3) Refinancing loans to which HOME loans are subordinated to ensure that

the terms of the new loan are reasonable.

[61 FR 48750, Sept. 16, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 61756, Oct. 1, 2002; 68 FR 10161, Mar. 4, 2003; 69 FR 16766, Mar. 30, 2004; 69 FR 68052, Nov. 22, 2004; 72 FR 16685, Apr. 4, 2007; 78 FR 44674, July 24, 2013]

§ 92.255 Converting rental units to homeownership units for existing tenants.

(a) The participating jurisdiction may permit the owner of HOME-assisted rental units to convert the rental units to homeownership units by selling, donating, or otherwise conveying the units to the existing tenants to enable the tenants to become homeowners in accordance with the requirements of § 92.254. However, refusal by the tenant to purchase the housing does not constitute grounds for eviction or for failure to renew the lease.

(b) If no additional HOME funds are used to enable the tenants to become homeowners, the homeownership units are subject to a minimum period of affordability equal to the remaining affordable period if the units continued as rental units. If additional HOME funds are used to directly assist the tenants to become homeowners, the minimum period of affordability is the affordability period under § 92.254(a)(4), based on the amount of direct homeownership assistance provided.

[78 FR 44676, July 24, 2013]

§ 92.256 [Reserved]

§ 92.257 Faith-based activities.

(a) *Equal treatment of program participants and program beneficiaries.* (1) *Program participants.* Organizations that are religious or faith-based are eligible, on the same basis as any other organization, to participate in HOME program. Neither the Federal Government nor a State or local government receiving funds under the HOME program shall discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or affiliation. Recipients and subrecipients of program funds shall not, in providing program assistance, discriminate against a program participant or prospective program participant on the basis of religion or religious belief.